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ADMIRAL MICHAEL MULLEN: Good morning.

ADM. MULLEN: I understand we have probably 50, 55 minutes. I would like to speak for a few minutes and then, if I may, open it up to questions. It's much more important for me to hear from you, hopefully getting at issues that are on your minds, and I am able to learn from that perspective. And one of the reasons I come to – I come back to Chile is to get updated and to learn. I was here almost three years ago; that was in another life, I was with – that was the head of my Navy, and I've moved beyond, well beyond that job as the United States Navy. I see many Navy representatives here from Chile. I'm actually not very good at answering Navy questions these days. I'm doing pretty good on Army and Marine Corps questions.

I would first of all – and I was asked to, I was asked to talk about jointness. I'll try to just tell you a little bit about what my priorities are right now, how I see them. I'll talk about jointness, and I did receive a relatively thorough briefing this morning, at least on the defense modernization vision and approach here in Chile, and jointness is a big – looks to be a big part of that. And I'll talk about that and then I'll open it up for questions.

Clearly, at the top of my list right now in terms of priorities are – is the Middle East, broad Middle East to include Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iraq and Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, you know, that part of the world. And at a time where in fact all of us are affected by this umbrella crisis in the financial world, and it's my belief that the financial crisis that we're in will affect all of our priorities from a security standpoint.

And it may not affect them, it may not affect it immediately, meaning in weeks or months, but I think it will affect it very dramatically in the years – in the year or two or three that we all face. Difficult to predict exactly where its impact will be. In some cases, I find myself, certainly in recent years, being pretty unable to be accurate in terms of predictions. And yet there are some areas, and I'll talk about them – and I mentioned the Middle East, there are some areas that potentially, certainly this financial crisis could impact, or I expect will impact.

So the instability there, the constant turmoil there, the constant churn in the Middle East, and at the top of that for me in particular is Pakistan and Afghanistan. And that will continue to be a challenge. Things are getting better in Iraq; you've seen as recently as this week the United States, our new president make announcements about further withdrawals from Iraq that are predicated on significant changes which have occurred over the last couple of years and a big turnaround.

So I'm hopeful that that will continue. There's still plenty of political work to do there, diplomatic work to do there on the – but on the military side, things are much better. Al Qaeda, who was very strong there a couple years ago, is in much worse shape. They're by no means gone, and they're still at the center of this global terrorist, extremist network, and they are very active, not just where they are diminished in Iraq, but they are increasingly active in other parts of the world. And so that's a huge concern. So that's kind of at the top of my list with respect to where I spend a lot of my time, where our strategy work is driven and indeed, what I think will certainly take up a lot of our resources for the next many years.

Secondly, I spend a fair amount of time focusing on the health of our force. We're in our eighth year of war. Most recently, a couple of weeks ago I was at Fort Campbell, in Kentucky, where the 101st Airborne is based, and they're on about – they're – the – they're on – most of the soldiers there and families were in their fourth deployment, and those deployments are six, eight, 12, 15 months a crack. And they – we pushed them exceptionally hard, and they've performed brilliantly, but I really do try to keep my finger on the pulse of where we are.

A week before that I was up in Fort Drum, New York, where the 10th Mountain Division resides, and in fact there were hands that went up when I – when I asked how many deployments, there were hands that went up at five and six deployments since 2002. So there's an enormous amount of stress and pressure. They've performed remarkably, and we are making our Marine Corps bigger, our Army bigger. We're starting to deploy the units that we built out of the Marine Corps, the additional units. It's still two years or so away before I can start to do that with our Army.

And all that said, while certainly our ground forces have taken the – are under the most pressures, our Air Force and our Navy's operational tempo has also been up and sustained and will be for the foreseeable future. And it's up above what it was 10 years ago fairly routinely. Significant part of that is in support of the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also other operations, global engagement and operations in other parts of the world, which is also important.

You may or may not know that when I was the head of the Navy, I pushed an awful lot of sailors ashore in Iraq and in Afghanistan. So did the chief of the Air Force. And it was to basically relieve the pressure that my ground forces were under. And we're still doing that, there's somewhere on the order of about 11,000 sailors ashore in the Central Command, AOR, as we speak. And there are thousands of airmen ashore doing the same thing. That's because we've learned a lot about what it takes to fight, we've learned a lot about enabling forces.

Long list of enablers in order to sustain the kind of combat we've been in, and that's medical, that's engineers, that's security, security and force protection. That's convoys, it's helicopters, it's intelligence, surveillance at resources and assets. It's analysts, it's linguists, and those kinds of capabilities, wherever they reside in my military, I'm pushing them into the fight, because I'm short on many of those and I can't afford to stand on service protocols and service views, and I need that kind of assistance when I'm putting people in harm's way, that kind of support. And the services are – my services have been, have been terrific in terms of supporting that.

So the whole issue of health, it extends far beyond just members, because the families are at the center of this as well. And it extends to treating and making sure we have the best care for them, those who've gone out and fought and died, and we take care of their families. Those who were wounded, and taking care of their families, and those who are under tremendous stress through repeated deployments, including extending that to stress in families. Very few places I go now where spouses aren't talking to my wife about their own version of post-traumatic stress, and that the kids who've not seen their mothers or fathers a lot for the last five or six years are having pretty significant mental-health challenges as well.

So how do we, how do we get our arms around all of that when this is the best military I've ever seen? They have performed extraordinarily well, and we need to continue to focus on them, for what we're doing now but also in preparing ourselves for the future. When I ask – when I get asked a question about getting ready for the future in the United States, and our budget is going to start to flatten out here just with the pressure of the overall financial crisis and the challenge that America has in reducing its budgets in its government, the number one way for us to get ready for the future is to make sure we get it right of our people. And that makes sure this combat-ardent force, these captains and sergeants make decisions to stay.

And no matter what I buy or where I operate, what my operations are in the future, if I can hang onto them and have them be the seed-corn for my military in the future, the United States military will continue to be the best it's ever been. And if I don't do that, then the opposite – then I worry about the opposite happening. So that's a significant part of my focus right now. So first priority, broader Middle East, second priority in resourcing those fights, training, equipped, et cetera. Second priority is health of the force and then third priority is really the rest of the globe. And I say that as I stand here this week in South America and Latin America, really, and extend this to this trip, where I was in Brazil yesterday, I'm here today, I go to Peru, Colombia, Mexico all this week.

And I have in my recent – certainly, as a senior officer, been concerned and thus focused on making sure that my military is engaged in this part of the world. I grew up, as may – as possibly was indicated, in Southern California, not very far from Mexico, but I was trained to look east and west, not north and south. And I believe those days are over and that we have to pay attention to each other, in – both from North America and South – from the North American and South American perspectives.

We have wonderful personal ties in so many ways. We have wonderful economic ties, and again, when it gets tough – and it's tough now, it's going to get tougher – we've got to figure out how to pull together. And the tendency when, you know, sometimes when things get tough is to isolate and pull in, consolidate and pull in, and leadership has got to pick the areas where that's just not acceptable, because that is – that will accelerate the crisis, if you will.

So leaders have to reach out at the right time, in the right place to ensure that these relationships get stronger over time, particularly in a time of crisis, and that we can depend on those relationships. So one of the reasons I am traveling is, this week, is to make sure that those relationships that are very strong get stronger, as it is clearly here between the United States

military and Chile, and that other relationships which need to get stronger, no matter what level they are, are both recognized and we understand them. And it's not just bilateral, because we live in a multilateral world, where we have to touch a lot of countries. And this region of the world is every bit as important as any region in the world. That it is not in a crisis as the Middle East is, is a credit to an awful lot of people.

What I want to make sure is that it never – you know, that we are participating in a way to assist, connect, strengthen so that it never is in a crisis. And to the degree we ignore that over time, we raise that risk, and to the degree we don't, I think we reduce that risk. So I used this trip this week, what I see and how I will engage as an example of all of us being connected globally, and there is risk around the world, and it's not just where we live. We've got challenges in Africa, we've got challenges in other parts of the world that may not be as visible routinely.

We've got huge challenges, and this is a – needless to say, Chile is a Pacific-facing country, and I spent a lot of my time in the Pacific and I understand that. And the stability in the Pacific Rim, as big as the Pacific is – and it is a big ocean, I understand that – is absolutely vital, as well. And that doesn't happen without constant engagement, increasing understanding what our challenges are and listening to other people.

And one of the reasons I come here is to listen and to, again, learn and then try to be a leader that recognizes, the center of the world is not the United States of America, and try to see challenges from other country's eyes, certainly here, today, Chile, in both preparation and my engagement, and then participating together to see if we can't move forward together in what is an increasingly dangerous world and increasingly challenging time. And a world in which no – there's not a single country in the world that can address these challenges alone. So we've got to figure out how to continue to work that together. And the military so often is such a strong underpinning for relationships between countries, as it is here, as it has been, is and will continue to grow.

So again, those are kind of the three priorities. And then I would just like to make a couple comments about jointness, then I'll open it up to questions. The United States – and I'll just speak from my own experience – we passed a law in our country in 1986. Most of the services ignored the law even after it was law. We ignored it as long as we could, but where it really started to kick in, where we could not ignore it anyway – anymore, was its direct effect on promotions.

And I know of no other way to change a service more rapidly than to affect promotions. Despite what leaders might say, despite what guidance and counsel might be out there, it is – it was literally a change that, up until that time, assignments of the joint staff were not valued assignments, in terms of promotion. And when the law changed – and actually, the services and the civilian leadership started to, in great detail, enforce that law by policies that affected promotions – the services got the word and started to send our best people into joint assignments, as opposed to, keep our best people in our services.

So that's one aspect of it, and it was assignments for promotion, and then it was also essentially, inside a service, in order to get that assignment, you obviously had to screen for

command, typically. And it was a combination of the screening process and the promotion process that got our attention and said, this is serious and so we are going to comply. So that's one.

We have – in 1990, 1991, we got involved in what was the first of what is now five conflicts, like now, Desert Shield, Desert Storm, might look at Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Balkans, look at Kosovo now and then and look at OI – OEF and OIF. So I'm five wars later into jointness, and we have progressed dramatically in terms of the joint world, with respect to what I call real jointness, not just checking-the-box jointness. And while we were joint in Desert Storm and Desert Shield, there was still way too much service parochialism, way too much turf protection. And it was – and it did not – and it held us back, as I look back on it, in terms of overall combat effectiveness.

We learned from that, started to evolve through peacekeeping operations which involved all of our services in a much more joint way, but peace – when you're raising combat forces, peacekeeping operations have limits in terms of what you're really learning. So we learned a certain amount through the, through the '90s, but it wasn't really until desert – I'm sorry, it wasn't really until OEF and OIF, where we started – where we were in conflicts where we were losing lives, and everything depended on making sure that didn't happen. And when that happened, services, my belief, my services really threw off any pretension of being a service.

Whatever you would reach for, you could, to enhance the joint fight and to make sure that those young men and women who we were sending into harm's way to sacrifice their lives have the best possible outcome in front of them, based on all our capabilities. It forced us to learn more about each other, and there is something very, very real when people are dying that makes you look differently at how you were raised, and it opens your lenses up to look at possibly a better way of doing business.

And we have found many, so from the nation – its nation stages in the early '90s, for us in Desert Storm and Desert Shield, to where we are now, it has – it is night and day. Far beyond doing something administratively to safe – basically, supporting successful combat operations, successful stability operations, and in fact, it is not reaching far outside the military into other agencies in my government so that I have people assigned to the Treasury Department. I have people assigned to the State Department. I have people assigned to my other agencies, and those tours, just like the initial joint tours, those tours will be valued in terms of future promotion and screening in for a command. And then you bring that back to your service, and the cycle continues.

Now, I'm not here to say that we should be completely, 100 percent joint. We shouldn't all take off our uniforms and all put on the same uniform, because in my country, the service cultures are exceptional. They are a great piece of who we are as a military and as a joint force. All the services bring differences that have been very powerful in our success. Another – a last area that I would ask you to think about in how you're doing it here, we could not have been successful where we have been without much improved and excellent to superb intelligence – and how we get intelligence and what we do with it, how we process it.

We have a sea change in the integration of intelligence and operations and in the time between getting a piece of information and putting it into the fight effectively. And I believe we live in a time where those fleeting indicators that we pick up are ones we have to respond with almost instantly or we lose the opportunity, and the next time the opportunity gets presented it's a tougher opportunity.

So how do our systems integrate that? How do we do it in a transparent way, from special operations, from highly classified programs to those programs in conventional forces to programs that are completely unclassified? How do we share that information, how do we do it rapidly, how do we do it and not compromise critical intel sources is a real challenge for us.

We do that so much better than we did three or four years ago – that I can get to the target and I can make a difference in the campaign plan routinely because of the improvements there. And you will hear us talk of – in the unmanned world, unmanned you pick it, you know, on the ground, in the air, under the sea, on the sea, far at sea, in space, close to land, you name it, it is a revolution in how we are applying technology and again it is being driven in great part because so many of our people are in harm's way.

So how do you do that when you're not in harm's way? How do you do that when your focus is on peacekeeping in preparation for the time that you might be there? That is a huge challenge that each and every one of you has given where you are. How do you create that sense of urgency to get where you need to go because once you're there, and something happens, you're not going to have time. You have to initiate those kinds of operations and that kind of combat obviously with wherever you are at the time.

It is a terrific, terrific pleasure to be back in Chile. You are great friends of our country, you in particular are great friends of our military. You've – and I have the highest regard for you, for how you've evolved militarily, for the capabilities that you have, which I am very aware of, and I want to applaud that and say keep that up. The only other thing I say the world continues to change, and we all – and it's changing pretty quickly – we all have to keep that pace up. So thanks, with that I'll open it up to questions.